

Message Text

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PAGE 01 AMMAN 03049 032102Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5639

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EXDIS

DEPT PASS TO SECDEF

FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, PGOV, '9, US
SUBJECT: MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND POLITICAL-MILITARY PROBLEMS

REF: STATE 076882

1. CONTINUING MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROBLEMS WITH JORDAN HAVE BEGUN TO REACH A VERY DIFFICULT STAGE. MOST RECENT EXAMPLE IS ANOTHER IN A SERIES OF POST-PONEMENTS OF JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION MEETING (REFTEL) WITH JORDAN.

2. SPECIFICALLY, GENERAL BIN SHAKER, WHO IS THE CALMEST OF ARABS, HAS JUST HAD ME ON THE CARPET. HE IS PERSONALLY UPSET AND HURT BY OUR CONTINUING TO PUT OFF THE JMC MEETING WHICH JORDAN HAS COUNTED ON HAVING THIS SPRING. WORSE, THERE IS NO EXPLANATION IN REFTEL EXCEPT "UNFORESEEN DEVELOPMENTS" TO OFFER TO SHAKER. HE MAY EVEN SUSPECT THIS IS PART OF A PRESSURE CAMPAIGN TO GET JORDAN TO DO SOMETHING-- HE IS NOT QUITE SURE WHAT. IN ADDITION, WELL-KNOWN
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ARAB TENDENCY TO TAKE PERSONAL AFFRONT TO A SLIGHT HAS BEEN AGGRAVATED BY OUR ONCE AGAIN POSTPONING THE MEETING. I OF COURSE DID WHAT I COULD TO CALM HIM DOWN.

3. WHAT WE NEED TO DO NOW IS TO OFFER SOME REASONABLE EXPLANATION OF WHY THE MEETING CANNOT BE HELD ON MAY 8

AS THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT HAD PROPOSED AFTER AN
EAYLIER POSTPONEMENT FROM APRIL. IN ADDITION, WE WILL
NEED CANDID AND FRANK POINTS TO MAKE AS TO WHY IT MUST
BE POSTPONED UNTIL JUNE 18. OTHERWISE WE SHOULD DO
OUR BEST TO PROPOSE AN EARLIER DATE. I REALIZE
DEPARTMENT'S CURRENT PREOCCUPATION WITH OTHER MIDEAST
ISSUES, BUT URGE THAT IN CONTEXT OF OUR INTEREST IN
JORDAN IN MIDDLE EAST PROCESS, WE GIVE THIS PROBLEM
SOME ATTENTION.

4. SHAKER TOLD ME IN A MOMENT OF CANDOR THAT HE
DID NOT SEE HOW SENIOR DEFENSE OFFICIALS COULD
BEGRUDGE TWO OR THREE HOURS WITH HIM IN WASHINGTON.
THE REMAINDER OF THE JMC IS TAKEN UP WITH STAFF LEVEL
DISCUSSIONS AND HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT MIDDLE
EASTERNS COVERING JORDAN WERE ALL GOING TO BE
TIED UP FOR THE NEXT FOUR MONTHS.

5. WE WILL ADDRESS GENERAL JORDANIAN MILITARY
CONCERNS WN THE FUTURE, BUT BELIEVE YOU SHOULD BE AWARE
OF THE FACT THAT WE ARE HEADED ONCE AGAIN INTO A
DIFFICULT PERIOD WITH JORDAN ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE
PROBLEMS. WE WILL NEED STRONG BACKING AND SUPPORT
FROM WASHINGTON TO DIFFUSE THE LITTLE POINTS WHICH
SEEM SO ENDLESSLY TO RAISE BIGGER ISSUES IN THE
HEADS OF OUR JORDANIAN FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS.

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6. ACTION REQUESTED: AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE
EXPLAINING IN ENOUGH DETAIL TO PUT SHAKER'S MIND
TO REST EXACTLY WHY IT IS THAT DEFENSE DEPARTMENT
MUST POSTPONE THIS MEETING ONCE AGAIN. IF THE
REASONS ARE NOT COGENT, I WOULD RESPECTFULLY
EXPECT AN EARLIER DATE. IF THE REASONS ARE
COGENT, I RESPECTFULLY REQUEST A COMMITMENT THAT
WOULD STICK.
PICKERING

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NNN

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